

Recommended Action Plan

- **Enlist the aid of the environmental community in promoting brownfields.** The environmental community is a strong proponent of both sustainable land use and carbon emission reduction and could be a valuable ally in raising public awareness about the benefits of brownfield redevelopment. In some instances, where complete cleanup is cost prohibitive, brownfields practitioners use risk based closure as a safety net for protecting human health and the environment rather than allowing an environmental threat to remain. We recommend that brownfields practitioners and the environmental community at large maintain an open dialogue to maximize both community and environmental benefits and achieve an effective level of environmental protection.
- **Increase awareness of brownfields' role in improving environmental quality.** Encourage the Governor's Policy Office and Energy Office to adopt a more proactive attitude toward brownfield redevelopment to increase the exposure and knowledge of how remediation of contaminated properties can enhance environmental quality. Other groups with similar agendas and interests (e.g., land use planners, green builders/LEED certifiers, etc.) should be educated through outreach as well.
- **Investigate the possibility of installing renewable energy facilities on brownfields.** Work with the Governor's Energy Office to formalize an approach to capitalize on the potential of using rehabilitated brownfields as renewable energy generating sites. One option is co-generation of methane from landfills. Another option is using brownfields as solar collector or wind generation sites. For example, the Colorado Brownfields Foundation is currently evaluating solar farm potential at a landfill in El Paso County. Brownfield properties, depending on the levels of contaminants on site, could very easily lend themselves to renewable energy production. This may also create more opportunities for less costly (and therefore more economically viable) cleanups, as the required cleanup would not be as great for such sites.
- **Expand application of existing tax credits.** A concept has been proposed to expand the existing brownfields tax credit to make more brownfield sites eligible and/or include the use of geothermal, solar, wind, or other suitable alternative energy sources, as part of sustainable redevelopment. This proposal would need to be further defined by a stakeholder group and other interested parties.
- **Work to dispel misconceptions and fears about liability.** There have been long-running concerns about landowner liability for potentially contaminated properties. These concerns – largely unfounded thanks to several policy provisions put into place at the federal level in recent years – have clouded the issue of brownfield efficacy. To dispel liability misconceptions, education needs to continue and expand among the real estate, development, and lending communities as well as local governments, to inform them about legislation-based liability relief measures.